

FACULTY'S PERSPECTIVE ON SUCCESSFUL UNIVERSITY: PERSPECTIVE FROM A REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

Beibit Mamrayev

The faculty members of Kazakhstan had to deliver their duties and service in a continuous process of changes in the system of higher education for the last quarter of the century. Transition from the Soviet model to the current one could not escape pains in consciousness of the senior generation and a brain-drain of skilled faculty members from higher education institutions. Now, experiencing the third decade of independence, there still exists a problem in determining the model of higher education and creation of competitive universities capable of satisfying the needs of the country in faculty of various kinds and profiles.

What is a successful university for faculties? This question does not provide unanimity of views, and it is confirmed by numerous discussions at departments and academic councils of universities. The difference in views almost directly correlates with age groups of faculty members. It is common that a number of faculty members passed an age threshold of 60 with many of them supporting good traditions of Soviet education, the advantages of that old system which is understandable. The age group of 35-55-year-olds has adjusted to the credit system of teaching quite well, but normally meaning only its formal procedures. However, there are some university teachers within this group who have found more value with the system that focuses on personalization of learning, as well as the dependence of the total assessment in a subject from continuous work by both a student and teacher during the whole semester. Finally, the youngest faculty group of 25-35 years of age is the most unstable, since understanding the importance of their work they have quite modest remuneration for it. The general will for all shall be a higher salary, high-quality students as well decent material and living conditions for teaching.

Consequently, the contour of a successful university is drawn in the eyes of academic departments and schools of the institution, i.e. a place where students have a high level of academic experience and preparedness, proper conditions for quality teaching and learning (well-equipped classrooms with an essential IT structure, a convenient location, infrastructure, faculty members' decent remuneration, high prestige of higher education institution).

Given the proper working conditions for faculty staff, faculty members are expected to make their contribution, introduce a personal initiative in the formation and development of a successful university. Development of new curricula, its adaptation to regional needs as well as labour market, awareness of the teaching mission in university, generation of innovations in education while maintaining traditions of higher education institutions is, undoubtedly, the most important task for the faculty today. But the solution of this task requires enthusiasm to work in the new direction. Management of any higher education institution will not be able to make it successful if there is resistance or a passive role of the faculty staff.

University top management, in turn, has to provide a high level of financial stimulation for the faculty staff (it is a point in which efforts of all groups of teachers and higher education institution management are combined under the new conditions). It is necessary to develop a new corporate ethics assuming a combination of efforts of all faculty members while maintaining their individuality, existence of productivity skills of research and analytical work.

In the current scholarship, there are statements that schools do not provide a necessary level of education for lifelong learning. This is only partly true, as a strong faculty team, rigorous hiring process, sufficient funding of academic and research works, transparent control of the current progress could enable to provide quality education of a prospective successful professional that will be in demand among employers.